

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bearnes, Billesbach, Buan, Eklund, Gay, Kolbe, Krehbiel, Minter, Weissling, Woodman, Zuckerman

Absent: Baesu, Herstein,

Date: Tuesday, February 15, 2022

Location: Zoom

Note: These are not verbatim minutes. They are a summary of the discussions at the Executive Committee meeting as corrected by those participating.

1.0 Call (*Kolbe*)

Kolbe called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Covid Update

Kolbe reported that 5,485 Covid tests were conducted last week, and the campus had a 2.81% total positivity rate. He noted that 1,750 of the tests were volunteer and of these tests the positive rate was 4.51%. He pointed out that those people getting volunteer tests typically had symptoms. Of the random mitigation tests the positivity rate was 2.03%. He reported that there are only 16 students in isolation as of this morning.

3.0 Approval of February 8, 2022 Minutes

Kolbe asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he asked for approval. Gay moved and Eklund seconded approval of the minutes. The Executive committee then approved the minutes.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Interview Questions for Dean of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts

The Executive Committee worked on developing questions specifically for the candidates for the Dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts.

4.2 Faculty Members for the Agricultural Research Division Dean Search Committee

The Executive Committee collaborated on identifying faculty members from IANR who could possibly serve on the search committee.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Report on Board of Regents Meeting

Kolbe reported that the graduate student housing situation was a primary topic of discussion and noted that many email messages have been received from faculty members about concerns over the loss of housing for graduate students. He stated that

after discussions the administration is now rethinking the plan and the timeline of it. He pointed out that the apartments are substandard and need to be brought up to code and will eventually need to be replaced.

Buan asked if Housing could phase out one building at a time and give graduate students more notice. Weissling asked what Housing's plans are. Kolbe stated that Housing wants to sell the buildings. He noted that there is a plan to build on the on the former Textron property on Vine Street and the complex would have housing available for both emeriti faculty members and graduate students.

Minter questioned whether Graduate Studies has any plan to help improve graduate student stipends which could help with housing costs. She wondered if the other Big Ten universities provide housing for their graduate students.

The Executive Committee agreed that Dean Hope should address the issue at the March 1 Faculty Senate meeting when she gives the annual Graduate Council report. Weissling stated that Dean Hope should also be asked about the status of Graduate Faculty members.

5.2 Possible Updates to Mask Mandates

Kolbe noted that with Covid cases decreasing the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department may remove the mask mandate sooner than February 25th, but he has asked that EVC Ankersen send out a message to all faculty members reiterating the existing pathways which would allow some courses to continue with the mask requirement. He noted that faculty or students can request masks still be worn and students with SSD can also make a request. Minter suggested that students in courses that would still require a mask be sent a message to remind them that for some classes masks would still be required. Kolbe stated that this notification can be provided by instructors through Canvas.

Kolbe noted that LLCHD usually gives 24-hour notice before changes are made to a mandate, and he has asked if the mandate expires during the week that the campus retain its mask mandate until the beginning of the following week to avoid any confusion.

5.3 Proposal to Incentivize Service on the Executive Committee

Gay asked if the proposal drafted by the Executive Committee has been given to AVC Walker to review. Kolbe reported that he is meeting with both EVC Ankersen at the end of the week and would present it to them at that time. He noted that he wanted to wait until the new EVC was in place.

5.4 Title IX Training

Gay reported that he recently had to take the Title IX training available through Firefly and said that it seemed to be the exact same as last year. Weissling pointed out that the Executive Committee discussed removing the so-called humor in the training and that ASUN called for the removal of it as well. Zuckerman asked if the accessibility features were addressed. Gay stated that his experience this year was identical to last year.

5.5 N2025 Video

Weissling pointed out that the N2025 plan talks about diversity and inclusion and noted that there are many people on campus with disabilities that are not getting the help that they need. For instance, while some of the new classrooms being built look great, the acoustics and lighting are not being considered for those who have hearing or vision problems. Buan suggested that the Executive Committee needs to take a different approach and have some of these issues raised by other Senators in the full Senate meetings.

Minter asked if there needs to be Senate representation at the open forums and feedback sessions that were mentioned in the N2025 video. Buan pointed out that she and Past President Hanrahan served on the strategic planning committees so there is precedent for members of the Senate being involved with the formation of the plan.

5.6 RFP Hearing of Companies Being Considered to Replace VidGrid

The Executive Committee discussed the recent RFP hearings for companies that would replace VidGrid. It was asked who made the decision not to release the names of the companies making presentations on their platforms. Woodman stated that Purchasing made the decision. Kolbe stated that he was disappointed when he learned that the presentations would not be recorded. He noted that he told CIO Tuttle that there needs to be a much more open fashion for these presentations, particularly since faculty members, who will be the most impacted by the change from VidGrid, cannot always attend the hearings due to their teaching schedule.

Billesbach asked if the Executive Committee could send a letter to the Board of Regents expressing the concerns of the removal of VidGrid since ITS does not seem to be paying attention to the faculty's concerns. Zuckerman pointed out that removing VidGrid would affect so much of online teaching and if changing the platform is going to occur every few years it would be incredibly disruptive.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.